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Library staffing patterns - function- or subject-focused?

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LIBRARY STAFFING PATTERNS - FUNCTION OR SUBJECT FOCUSED?

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Subject Librarianship

When librarians deliver several services – such as information literacy instruction, liaison communications, and collection development – to an academic department or departments.

Focus is on academic departments as area of expertise.

Functional Librarianship

When librarians deliver services – such as data management, digital humanities assistance, or online learning expertise – to a range of departments.

Focus is on the skill or service as area of expertise.

Areas of librarianship that have long been “functional”:

Cataloging

Acquisitions

Circulation

Interlibrary Loan

Special collections, branch libraries, smaller libraries – librarians may be both “subject” and “functional”

For the purposes of this research – I am looking at public services, which has long been organized around subject specialties.

Institution	Total Personnel	Librarians/ Archivists	Admins	Staff
Ball State	111	28	5	78
BGSU	68	27	1	40
Central Michigan	57	20	3	34
Eastern Michigan	40	20	1	19
GVSU	72	34	3	35
Kent State	74	35	5	34
Miami U	81	35	4	42
Northern Illinois	66	19	4	43
Oakland U	41	15	3	23
Ohio U	68	25	3	40
University at Buffalo	123	55	6	62
University of Akron	61	13	2	46
University of Toledo	48	19	2	27
Western Michigan	65	22	3	40

- 14 mid-sized schools – from Michigan or MAC.
- Information gathered from online directories and information pages.
- May 20 and May 21, 2020.
- Looked only at titles, not their classification (permanent, lecturer, faculty, full-time).

Institution	Total # Departments/Units
Ball State	15
BGSU	12
Central Michigan	9
Eastern Michigan	10
GVSU	(not listed)
Kent State	20
Miami U	7
Northern Illinois	18
Oakland U	14 (teams)
Ohio U	11
University at Buffalo	6
University of Akron	10
University of Toledo	6
Western Michigan	6

144 Departments (127 names)

Typical Departments/Units:

Administration	Collections
Access Services	Instruction
Acquisitions	Reference
Branch Libraries	Systems
Archives/Special Coll.	Cataloging

Not-So-Typical Departments/Units:

Copyright Services
 Design and Development Services
 Digital Collections and Scholarship
 Learning Commons
 Multimedia Studio
 Share & Showcase
 Statistical Consulting

FUNCTIONAL POSITION TITLES

Consultation Librarian and Bibliographer

Creation & Innovation Services Librarian

Data Librarian

Digital Archivist

Digital Collections Librarian

Digital Projects Librarian

Digital Strategies Librarian

Faculty Scholarship Outreach Librarian

First Year Experience Librarian

Global Education Librarian

Government and Open Collections Librarian

Information Literacy Librarian

Instructional Design Librarian

Intranet Architecture Adjunct Librarian

Learning Objects Adjunct Librarian

Numeric and Spatial Data Services Librarian

Online Learning Librarian

Open Content and Digital Publishing Librarian

Project Manager, Collections

Resident Librarian for User Experience

Scholarly Communications Librarian

Strategic Assessment Librarian

Student Services Librarian

Undergraduate Engagement Librarian

User Experience Librarian

User Services Librarian

Web Services Librarian

Institution	# Functional Positions
Ball State	1
BGSU	2
Central Michigan	0
Eastern Michigan	3
GVSU	8
Kent State	6
Miami U	11
Northern Illinois	0
Oakland U	2
Ohio U	0
University at Buffalo	10
University of Akron	1
University of Toledo	3
Western Michigan	4

Total # Librarians/Archivists – 367

L/A with functional position titles - 51
(that is 13.9%)

Functional positions with
Subject Responsibilities – 22 (43%)

Functional positions with without
Subject Responsibilities – 29 (57%)

	Total	With Subject Responsibilities	Without Subject Responsibilities
All Librarians/Archivists	367	193 (53%)	174 (47%)
Functional Librarians	51	22 (43%)	29 (57%)
All Non-Functional L/A	316	171 (54%)	145 (46%)

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ Academic Libraries are organizing functionally – “at the fringes.”
- ❖ Positions are more likely to be functional than entire departments.
- ❖ Organization by subject/discipline (in public services) is still firmly entrenched.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ How will COVID-19 affect library staffing and organization?
- ❖ Are librarians performing functional duties without the position title?
- ❖ What is the range of duties of non-librarian/archivist employees?
- ❖ Are there other units on campus poised to meet emerging research needs?

Thank you.

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